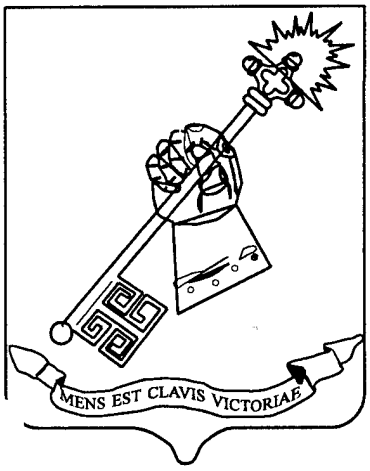
TASK FORCE SMITH--An Intelligence Failure?

A Monograph
By
Major Richard E. Matthews
Military Intelligence



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ABSTRACT

Task Force Smith -- An Intelligence Failure?, By Major Richard E. Matthews, 51 pages. This monograph examines intelligence and how it was applied to Task Force Smith. Task Force Smith was a regimental combat from 1st Battalion 21st Infantry Regiment commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Charles "Brad" Smith, the first American soldiers committed during the Korean War. The thesis analyzes what was known about the North Korean Peoples Army immediately before, during, and after the employment of American soldiers. There was adequate intelligence available in June 1950 that predicted war on the Korean peninsula, and there was also adequate intelligence that could have benefitted Lieutenant Colonel Smith and his soldiers. Unfortunately, an immature command and control system, an untried intelligence system, and a chaotic military situation prevented what was known about the enemy to get down to the tactical commander. Intelligence is of no value unless it gets into the hands of the commander. It must be pushed down to the decisionmaker, and if it is not, the commander must become actively involved in the intelligence process and focus the intelligence effort. Unless intelligence and operations is integrated into plans the risk remains for repeating Task Force Smith.

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One who knows the enemy and knows himself; will not be endangered in a hundred engagements. One who does not know the enemy but knows himself will sometimes be victorious, sometimes meet with defeat. One who knows neither the enemy nor himself will invariably be defeated in every engagement. Sun Tzu.[1]

Knowledge is power. Knowledge is also a part of intelligence. In life and in war, intelligence empowers those who have it. In war, synchronizing intelligence into the operational plan can mean the difference between success and failure, winning and losing. The right intelligence provided on time can give a tactical commander the critical information that can lead to tactical or operational success and accomplishment of the unit's mission. Intelligence in war means every piece of information about the enemy and his country, how he fights, his leadership, equipment, intentions, tactics, and training.[2] That information must be the basis of plans and operations. Brigadier General (Retired) Charles B. Smith did not believe that tactical intelligence would have made a difference in the outcome of Task Force Smith, but I disagree.[3]

Many of the great practitioners of war understood the relevance of intelligence. Napoleon Bonaparte understood the special responsibility of the commander in having good reconnaissance and intelligence, "if I always appear prepared, it is because before entering on an undertaking, I have meditated for long and foreseen what may occur."[4] Success for Napoleon rested in his understanding of the battlefield, preparation for battle, and wargaming the outcome. T.E. Lawrence, too, shows the encompassing nature of intelligence: "when I took a decision or adopted an alternative, it was after studying every

relevant -- and any irrelevant--factor. Geography, tribal structure, religion, social customs, language, appetites, standards--all were at my finger-ends. The enemy I knew almost like my own side."[5] Knowledge of the enemy is the prerequisite for success. It is not enough to know about the enemy, one requires a thorough knowledge of everything about him, coupled with an intimate understanding of friendly strengths and limitations. Accurate intelligence is invaluable. It was true for Napoleon and Lawrence, and it is true today.

Intelligence is equally valuable at all three levels of war; strategic, operational, and tactical. Strategic intelligence supports the formation of policy at the national and theater level.[6] President Harry Truman made a strategic decision to send forces to Korea. At the next level down, operational intelligence supports the planning and execution of campaigns and major operations.[7] General of the Army Douglas MacArthur directed forces in the far east theater of the Pacific at the operational level.

At the lowest level, tactical intelligence supports the execution of battles and engagements and tells where the enemy can be decisively engaged.[8] This information is needed by the brigade or joint task force commander (JTF) to destroy an enemy regiment. Intelligence must be linked and "nested" at all three levels for consistent support. Ultimately, all intelligence must be directed toward the combat commander at the tactical level of war, where the actual fighting occurs. The integration of intelligence into the commander's decision-making process is the key to successful operations. Intelligence that is gathered but sits at

the strategic or operational level is of little or no value, it must be pushed down to the tactical warfighter.

Recounting the 1950s defeat of the ad hoc fighting force, former Army Chief of Staff, General Gordon R. Sullivan, emphatically declared there would never be any more Task Force Smith's.[9] What General Sullivan meant was that he was not going to allow the army as a whole, or congress in part, to fail America's sons and daughters by sending them to war without adequate preparation. During his tenure as Chief, General Sullivan would also have the army prepared to meet the demands of operations other that war (OOTW). OOTW covers the full spectrum of conflict from noncombatant evacuation operations to peacekeeping operations to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.[10] Critical to any objective is the effective use of intelligence. As the Korea debacle showed, the tactical commanders might have used intelligence to determine just how to employ friendly forces against known enemy forces to avoid the early rout in 1950.

Task Force Smith was a regimental combat team (RCT) from the 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Charles "Brad" Smith. The soldiers of Task Force Smith were the first American combat unit to arrive in Korea after the North Korea Peoples Army (NKPA) attacked south across the border on June 25, 1950. Under United Nations auspices, the president authorized the introduction of American ground forces to Korea to delay the advancing enemy and allow time for reinforcements to arrive from Japan.

Task Force Smith deployed with just over 400 men with rifles; two understrength infantry companies with headquarters and communications equipment, two 75mm recoilless rifles, two 4.2-inch mortars, six 2.36-inch bazooka rocket launcher teams, and four 60mm mortars. The ad hoc nature of this regimental combat team was necessary to get a force as quickly into Korea as possible, and in 1950 this was the basic structure of an American infantry battalion minus two companies. Accurate intelligence would have shown that this infantry force was inadequate to meet the threat posed by the NKPA, and should have been reinforced with the 24th Division's tank company.

Delta Battery 52nd Field Artillery commanded by First Lieutenant Dwain Scott, with six towed 105mm howitzers and its battalion headquarters commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Miller O. Perry, joined the task force. Colonel Perry positioned the howitzers on the high ground overlooking the Seoul-Pusan Highway in direct fire range of the task force with supporting artillery fires.[11] Colonel Smith positioned his companies on defensible terrain that covered the road, rail and infantry avenues of approach.

In hindsight, it seems obvious that Task Force Smith deployed with inadequate force to do the assigned mission. Did Task Force Smith deploy and fight in Korea with the best information about the enemy? The answer is no, Task Force Smith did not have the best information to do its mission because it did not have intelligence to do its mission, additionally, Korea was an immature military theater with immature lines of communication.

The command and control structure in the Pacific and Far East was not designed in expectation of a major war in Asia. U.S. military strategy in the region was not focused on checking the expansion of communism in the Far East and Southeast Asia. At the macro level, failure in Korea can be attributed to U.S. policy in the Far East, the absence of unity of command, and the lack of coordination among intelligence gathering agencies. The intelligence these agencies collected was not shared among them. Had this been done, they might have been better able to portray a clearer picture of the North Korean threat and its intention to attack.

U.S. national policy was focused on containing the spread of Soviet communism around the world, but specifically in Europe, and Korea had been excluded from the American defensive perimeter. In September 1947, President Harry Truman ordered an estimate of the importance of further military occupation in Korea from the point of military security to the United States.[12] Secretary of Defense James V. Forrestal responded that the troops and bases in Korea were of minor strategic value for American security. The Joint Chiefs of Staff reasoned that in the event of war American soldiers would be a liability since they could not be maintained without substantial reinforcements prior to an attack; any American offensive launched in Asia would bypass Korea, and air power could neutralize any threat. Air power was believed to be more feasible and less costly than ground forces.

> From the strategic viewpoint . . . Korea is of little strategic value to the United States and that any commitment to United States use of military force in Korea would be ill-advised and impracticable in view of the potentialities of the over-all world situation and of our heavy international obligations as compared with our current military strength.[13]

In 1948 no threat appeared imminent and the Joint Chiefs recommended the evacuation of the 45,000 troops stationed in Korea, since they could be used more profitably elsewhere.

The State Department concurred with the JCS recommendation on the grounds that budget constraints required consolidation of military forces and agreed that concentration in areas of major strategic interest was best. Strategic areas included Germany and Continental United States (CONUS), but not Korea. Other points of agreement between the Department of Defense and the State Department were the predisposition to think of Korea's importance only in terms of a total-war strategy, the strong South Korean desire for an end to U.S. occupation, and the Soviet announcement that Russian troops would be withdrawn from North Korea.[14] Secretary of State Dean Acheson, in a speech before the National Press Club on January 12, 1950, defined the official U.S. policy for the American defense perimeter in the Pacific. The perimeter ran from the Aleutian Islands (outside the Kuriles) to Japan, through the Ryukus (Okinawa) to the Philippines. The United States possessed the power to act within this strategic chain. Outside this perimeter the U.S. had no obligation and could not guarantee support.[15] With Acheson's statement, then Colonel Phillip Davidson, G-2 Operations, Far East Command, believed the North Koreans began planning in earnest for the invasion of South Korea.[16] The statement from a high official in the Truman administration probably encouraged the Communists to believe the United States would not defend South Korea since it was not included in the U.S.

established defense perimeter. Kim Il Sung's fledgling government and his Russian advisors now had the indication that the United States was not concerned if Korea fell into communist hands.

Prior to Korea gaining independence in 1948, the Korean Peninsula fell under the responsibility of Far East Command. Because Korea fell outside the purview of General MacArthur's General Headquarters (GHQ), his focus was not on that peninsula, but on defending east of Korea. As the Commander in Chief Far East (CINCFE) and the Supreme Commander Allied Powers (SCAP), General MacArthur's primary responsibility was in the defense and occupation of Japan, not Korea[17]. The specific missions were defense of the Ryukus and Japan, protection of air and sea lanes in the FEC, denial of Formosa to the enemy, support of the Pacific Command, the Alaskan Command, and the Strategic Air Command, assistance to the Republic of the Philippines in the defense of the islands, and providing safety for the U.S. personnel in Korea.[18] His area of responsibility ran through the chain of islands fringing the coast of Asia. It started at the Philippines and continued through the Ryukyu archipelago which included its broad main bastion, Okinawa. Then it bent back through Japan and the Aleutian Island chain back to Alaska.[19] Intelligence cooperation at the national, or strategic level, might have refocused the defense of Japan by concentrating on Korea. The Japanese had always been concerned about Korea, because they saw it as a dagger threatening Japan. Historically, Korea had been a staging area for countries attacking the islands of Japan.

General MacArthur's headquarters was located in downtown Tokyo, and it comprised four general staff sections, several small functional offices, and nine special staff or civil sections. As was standard in American military headquarters, the G-1 section developed policy and plans for personnel and administration, G-2 for intelligence, G-3 for operations and training, and G-4 for supply. The functional offices in the occupation force were the Diplomatic, International Prosecution, Reparations, Civil Transportation, General Accounting, Civilian Personnel, General Procurement Agent, and Civilian Property custodian. The nine special staff sections were Government, Public Health and Welfare, Economic and Scientific, Civil Information and Education, Civil Intelligence, Natural Resources, Civil Communications, Legal, and Statistics and Reports.[20] A considerable bureaucracy of over 2,000 military and civilian staff members, the GHQ staff assisted MacArthur in implementing American policy. The main focus of this headquarters was on restoring Japan, rebuilding the government and infrastructure of a nation, and the self image of its people after it had been defeated.

In December 1945, a Moscow conference attended by Secretary of State James Byrnes and delegates from Russia and Great Britain, authorized the Far Eastern Commission to oversee General MacArthur's supervision of the occupation of Japan. It consisted of representatives from all eleven nations that had been at war against Japan. The commission transmitted orders to an advisory group known as the Allied Council for Japan; represented by The United States, The British Commonwealth, China, and Soviet Russia. This commission and

council was designed as a notional higher headquarters, but neither of these groups had authority over General MacArthur, and he reported only to the Joint Chiefs of Staff for military issues and the State Department for non-military issues.

General MacArthur's immediate goal was to establish democracy in Japan. Beyond that, General MacArthur had to punish military and political war criminals, while releasing political prisoners. His next task was to rebuild the structure of a representative government that would be accepted internationally. The Japanese constitution needed modernization that included provisions for holding free elections and enfranchising women.. He attempted to revive the war torn economy by liberating farmers, establishing a free labor movement, and encouraging a free economy. Finally, he sought to decentralize political power, abolish police oppression, separate church from state, develop a free and responsible press, and liberalize the education system. In executing these tasks General MacArthur's aim was not to keep Japan down, but to build a new kind of Japan that would give the Japanese people freedom and justice, and a sense of security.[21] The myriad of these missions made it difficult to focus on anything except Japan.

Because of his preoccupation with rebuilding Japan, General MacArthur spent very little time with the soldiers assigned to his command or their training. To his credit six months before the Korean War, he instituted a tactical training program for army units, but they were not trained to standard by June 25, 1950. Stationed in Japan were four occupation infantry divisions, the 7th, 24th, 25th, and 1st Cavalry of the Eighth Army. The Eighth Army, commanded by Lieutenant

General Walton H. Walker, had been the principle army command in Japan since World War II ended. The Eighth Army was authorized 87,215 men, but had an actual strength of only 45,561 and a combat strength of 26,494. This combat strength was spread over the occupation divisions and an antiaircraft artillery group. Each of the divisions was one-third below strength; the regiments had only two instead of three battalions, light tanks instead of heavy, 105mm howitzers instead of 155mm cannons.[22] The units were garrisoned at camps from Kyushu in the south to Hokkaido in the north. Concentration was on occupation duties, not combat. Their administrative and housekeeping duties took so much time, that units had no inclination for combat training. Training that was conducted emphasized discipline, courtesy, and conduct. No serious effort was made to maintain combat efficiency at battalion or higher level.[23]

Just prior to the Korean conflict there were three intelligence gathering bodies operating without close coordination in Korea. From 1949 to 1950, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Korean Military Advisory Group (KMAG), and the Korean Liaison Office (KLO) maintained offices with redundant capabilities on the Korean peninsula. On August 15, 1948, the Republic of Korea (ROK) was created. With the independence of the ROK, U.S. troops began formally withdrawing from Korea, leaving only a small military force to advise and assist in the training of the ROK Army the [KMAG]. The last U.S. combat troops completed their withdrawal from Korea on June 29, 1949, and the military intelligence gathering capability went with it. Two days later Korea was removed

from the responsibility of General MacArthur and Far East Command (FECOM) effective July 1, 1949. The State Department was given complete control of U.S. interests, including operational control of the military forces left in country.

The CIA was the civilian information collection agency that remained in Korea. Without the presence of military units, the CIA was responsible for both tactical and strategic intelligence and it was not equipped to do either very well. It had only four agents in the country. In Japan, it only had three agents working out of a hotel in Tokyo. Seven total agents could not possibly cover the vast region of the Far East. The CIA was not just directed at Korea, but was to cover China and Formosa as well. They collected from their sources and reported to the American Ambassador to Korea, John J. Muccio rather than provide any analysis. Following a review, Ambassador Muccio forwarded those intelligence reports to Washington. The Korea field office assumed that a complete analysis would be done in Washington, yet it was not. Information on Korea was not given much priority in Washington. From 1 March through the outbreak of war, there was no mention of Korea in the CIA's daily summaries. During the same period, the CIA weekly summary mentioned Korea only six times. The lack of analysis in both Korea and Washington was a significant part of the breakdown of the intelligence system contributing to the intelligence failure in Korea.

Brigadier General William L. Roberts, a former armor commander in Europe during World War II, was Chief of the United States Military Advisory Group to the Republic of Korea (KMAG) prior to the outbreak of hostilities. In

this capacity, he worked directly for Ambassador Muccio with duties to the American Mission in Korea (AMIK) in Seoul. He headed an American military force of nearly 500 enlisted men and officers that remained to assist the ROK military establishment. While Ambassador Muccio had a thorough understanding of Korean politics, he had very little experience with military affairs and depended heavily on General Roberts for advice.

In assessing the Korean terrain, General Roberts did not believe that Korea was tank country. Its steep mountains and deep valleys did not allow the armored warfare to which he had grown accustomed in World War II. He did not remember from history the mistake the French made in believing the Ardennes was not good tank country. His apparent indifference to the NKPA armored forces was simply inexplicable.[24] It is not enough to think what one would do if he were the enemy, the intelligence advisor must think like the enemy. The tank was the only piece of military hardware that could produce the shock, firepower, and speed necessary to gain a quick decisive victory over the ROK Army. In the Roberts training campaign of ROK Army units in the spring of 1950, Soviet tanks were scarcely mentioned either publicly or privately.[25]

General Roberts was responsible for tactical intelligence in Korea after June 1949, but intelligence gathering was not his priority. He was the senior trainer for the ROK Army. In this capacity, his mission was to develop and train a South Korean force capable of preserving internal security, preventing border raids and incursions, and deterring armed attack or other aggression by North Korean

forces.[26] Intelligence was gained by the American military advisors assigned to the ROK Army units throughout the country. Any intelligence the KMAG gained was forwarded through General Roberts to the ambassador to Washington. There was no G-2 section in Korea, no office dedicated to conducting tactical analysis. The nearest G-2 section was in Japan at General MacArthur's headquarters, but his headquarters was not in KMAG's chain of command, and did not receive every report forwarded to Washington.

While MacArthur's Far East Command had no direct authority over Korea and the KMAG, his G-2 Major General Charles A. Willoughby established a small intelligence unit in Korea called the Korean Liaison Office (KLO). The KLO was a covert operation to provide General Willoughby with some eyes and ears in Korea, and it had 15 Korean agents operating across the 38th Parallel in North Korea.[27] Because of its covert nature, it did not even share intelligence it gained with the KMAG. The KLO in conjunction with G2 FECOM was the only office conducting any analysis. It reported intelligence to Japan, and those summary reports were forwarded to the Pentagon.

In all, there were three agencies all reporting vertically without sharing intelligence horizontally, and only G2 FECOM conducted any analysis before forwarding its reports.

The CIA, as the intelligence office for the State Department and the president reported that North Korea's army was no greater than 40,000. This was the beginning of miscalculations by the CIA. General Willoughby's G-2 section,

using KLO reports, estimated the threat to be roughly 136,000 including 150 Soviet tanks.[28] Later, North Korean prisoner of war interrogation reports estimated the NKPA stood at about 135,000 men. The discrepancy of nearly 100,000 between the CIA estimate and General Willoughby muddied the waters concerning the conditions in North Korea.[29]

For several months, the KMAG had reported the buildup of forces and equipment just north of the 38th Parallel. Enemy raids, infiltrations and inflammatory announcements were also forwarded. All along the 38th Parallel armed skirmishing took place. The supposedly demilitarized border area was like a war zone. Raids and attacks by both sides interrupted the night calm. Infantry companies and artillery batteries took part in numerous firefights, each attempting to gain the slightest advantage or to emplace infiltrators or agents. Even after all of these reports, what was missing was the synthesis -- the impact of what these actions meant.

In the last six months of 1949 the KMAG had officially logged an astounding 400 border incidents.[30] While this was short of a total invasion, it was preparation for one and those doing the fighting could not be convinced otherwise.

Three weeks before the war began, Ambassador Muccio warned the Senate Armed Services Committee, "the undeniable material superiority of the North Korean forces would provide North Korea with the margin of victory in the event of a full-scale invasion of South Korea . . . particularly in the matter of heavy infantry support weapons, tanks, and combat aircraft which the USSR had

supplied and continued to supply."[31] In reporting the problem the ambassador did not underscore the impact of the enemies capabilities, or the necessity to do something about it. If the ambassador could have had General Roberts with him to emphasize the NKPA capabilities and trends, the committee might have been convinced. However, General Roberts was on his way to retirement, and for some reason he still believed the ROK Army was capable of defending itself from North Korean aggression. General MacArthur's G-2, a representative from his intelligence section or the KLO, could also have provided credibility to the testimony the ambassador was providing.

Beginning in May 1950, incidents along the 38th Parallel and guerrilla activity in the interior of the Republic of Korea suddenly dropped. The NKPA was inspecting its troops, resting, rearming, and finalizing plans before its invasion. Indicators such as these are supposed to alert intelligence personnel to the possibility of conflict. The abrupt cessation of activity, and immediate radio silence have always been the prelude for attack. Despite evidence to the contrary, the CIA and the KMAG forecasted that the North Koreans had given up on a military solution in favor of diplomacy. This was the calm before the storm. Intelligence failed to synthesize the indicators for attack and Korea and the world was strategically surprised.

Even without taking the time to rest and rearm, the North Korean Army was superior to the South Korean Army in almost every category. The North Koreans had 150 Soviet made medium tanks carrying 85-mm guns. The T34, the

Soviet main battle tank during World War II, was a combat-proven fighting machine that was well suited for the Korean terrain because of its low silhouette and exceptional traction. While this tank was considered obsolete by the Soviets and eligible for export, it proved more than adequate during the early days of the war since South Korea had no tanks. The best defense for tanks has always been other tanks, but there was no significant anti-tank capability in the entire ROK Army.

In December 1949, the first intelligence reports of a North Korean armored capability reached Seoul.[32] This knowledge did not cause the South Koreans to rethink the preparation of their defenses with a force capable of countering armor. As military advisors, the KMAG did not assist in changing the ROK defensive scheme, since any defense must be designed to meet the enemy's strongest capabilities. Intelligence reporting had previously identified an armored threat, but intelligence and operations had not been integrated to devise a plan for countering it.

Besides tanks, the NKPA had three types of artillery patterned after a Soviet division; 122-mm howitzers with a range of 12,000 yards, 76-mm field guns, and SU-76mm self-propelled guns mounted on the T-34 chassis. South Korea had the 105mm howitzer with a maximum effective range of 8,200 yards. Not only could the NKPA artillery outrange the South, it exceeded them by an average of three-to-one. The north was capable of shooting artillery beyond the range of the south, keeping them pinned down indefinitely. There were seven

North Korean combat assault infantry divisions numbering 78,000 men in arms, many having trained in China and the Soviet Union, approximately 6,000 in the tank brigade, 3,000 in an independent infantry regiment, 2,000 in a motorcycle regiment, and 23,000 in three reserve divisions. Additionally, 18,600 troops were in the Border Constabulary, and 5,000 in the Army and corps headquarters.[33]

Before the Russians completed their evacuation of North Korea on 19 September 1948,[34] they had established a trained and ready force capable of both defensive and offensive operations. They left offensive equipment in the form of attack aircraft, armored regiment, long range artillery, and Soviet military advisors similar to the American KMAG to train and maintain equipment. South Korean military officials were not given access to all of the KMAG intelligence reports, and they did not know the extent of the NKPA preparations for war. Had those intelligence reports been available, they might have justified requesting more U.S. military assistance and received a greater commitment to include Korea in the American defensive perimeter.

Because the KMAG did not provide intelligence reports to the ROK Army, ROK leaders did not fully recognize the extent of North Korean capabilities, and the ROK Army was not prepared. South Korea's divisions totaled about 100,000 men; 35,000 assigned to headquarters and service units and 65,000 poorly trained and lightly equipped soldiers organized in eight infantry divisions.[35] Although the ROK Army had enough men to repel an attack, they did not have sufficient weapons or equipment.

South Korean President, Dr. Syngman Rhee, had appealed to the U.S. for tactical aircraft, tanks, and motorized artillery, but his requests were denied. Washington leaders feared that with a stronger army President Rhee would invade the north to unify Korea as he had threatened to do repeatedly .[36] The U.S. was not looking for another shooting war in Asia, no matter which side initiated it. Yet, if the available intelligence had been processed and disseminated to effectively describe the extent of North Korean preparations, the U.S. State Department might have acquiesced to President Rhee's requests and possibly postponed the June 25, 1950 invasion. As early as August 1949, Rhee in a letter to President Truman appealed for aid and supplies. He said:

> Unless I and my government with aid of our friends, do find solutions, the immediate future for our nation is bleak and bloody . . . Some American advisors assure us that the Communists will never attack in force, and therefore we may rest easily defended by our brave army. We Koreans believe that the Communist, under Soviet direction intend to attack in force, that they will do so, and if they do, it is we, the Koreans civilian and military, who will pay the price, not the good-willed American advisors . . . American officers tell me we have sufficient ammunition for two months of combat; my own officers tell me it is only sufficient for two days.[37]

President Rhee's report did not produce a sense of urgency in Washington among the political or the military establishment. He did not substantiate his claims with intelligence data. In addition, there was no significant enemy activity in 1949 to warrant offensive equipment. Six months later, armed with reports from KMAG, President Rhee might have made a more convincing argument.

Instead of Korea gaining more military equipment, Ambassador Muccio and the State Department played a more active role in South Korea's army. Ambassador Muccio garnered operational control over General Roberts and

KMAG operations. The State Department thought it necessary to acquire control over Korea, because the Americans did not want to offer any military provocation to the Soviet Union or North Korea.

KMAG did attempt to maintain militqry liaison with General MacArthur's headquarters through periodic visits, and message traffic, including forwarding information copies of communications sent to the Pentagon, but this was ineffective. Since KMAG's vertical chain of command did not formally include Far East Command (FECOM), horizontal integration of at least the intelligence section was needed on an information basis. Maintaining contact with Korea was not a priority for FECOM since General MacArthur was only responsible for logistical support to the American Mission in Korea (AMIK) and for the evacuation of U.S. nationals from Korea in an emergency.[38]

A memorandum of understanding establishing the integration of intelligence between KMAG and G-2 FECOM might have resolved many of the inconsistencies between the intelligence agencies. Such an agreement to exchange daily or weekly intelligence summaries (INTSUM) describing events in Korea would have been invaluable. This would not have been for chain of command purposes, but an informal way of sharing information between Korea and Japan. Instead, information on Korea traveled around the world to Washington before reaching MacArthur's GHQ just across the Sea of Japan.

From June 1949 to June 1950 the KLO sent 1,195 consecutive intelligence reports to General MacArthur's headquarters in Tokyo. In the critical six months

immediately before the outbreak of the war, 417 special reports were filed.[39] These reports detailed the build-up of enemy forces in North Korea, giving actual units, their disposition and equipment, and the probable time of attack.

A sampling of those KLO reports paints a picture of NKPA intentions. A report on June 15, 1949 showed Chinese Communist troops disguised as war refugees arriving in Pyongyang.[40]

Three months later a report from Sept. 1, 1949 showed an increase in the covert entry of Chinese troops into North Korea.[41]

On Dec. 8, 1949 a report showed Soviet commitment to the Korean peninsula, the structure of the NKPA, and a prediction of the most probable time for attack.

> North Korean government and their Chinese allies are under complete domination of Russia. Soviets will not permit the indefinite existence of a non-Communist state in the Korean Peninsula. . . Patterned on the master plan, the North Korean governments is merely a puppet of Soviet Russia. Acting as overseer is a Soviet mission of 300 persons in Pyongyang. . .The army is composed of 4 to 8 divisions and independent brigades and possesses normal infantry weapons, howitzers, tanks, and aircraft. . . With the conclusion of the Chinese Communist campaign in China, more troops and supplies may be channeled to North Korea. . . Climatic conditions most favorable for military operations have passed [December]. [The] next favorable period for any such action will occur in April and May 1950.[42]

By Jan. 5, 1950 the KLO reported an attack could be expected that month based on NKPA troop movements.

> North Korea has set march and April 1950 as the time to invade South Korea. Such threats should be viewed in relation to military activities. By this criterion, the movement of the 3rd NK Division into the western 38th Parallel, the arrival of Chinese Communist personnel, the southward displacement of the NK 2nd Division and expansion of Border constabulary seem significant in terms of military action in the spring.[43]

By Mar. 10, 1950 the KLO was again reporting the possibility of a North Korean attack. After bracketing a time of attack in the spring or fall, the latest report pointed to a June campaign.

> NKPA will be prepared to invade South Korea by fall or possibly by spring of this year [1950] as indicated by armed forces expansion and major troop movements. . . Latest reports received that the NKPA will invade South Korea in June.[44]

The key piece of intelligence that most probably indicated an invasion was found in a KLO report dated Apr. 15, 1950.

> In mid-March, the Communist governments ordered evacuation of all civilians residing in an area within three miles of the 38th Parallel. Vacated housing in latter area then occupied by troops and guerrillas. Purpose reported as "preparation for war and to interfere with South Korean intelligence operations."[45]

The final KLO report dated exactly 30 days before the attack May 25, 1950, linked inspections to units in the field as preparing for war.

> National Inspection teams have completed field inspections of all units of the armed forces in North Korea (a preparatory war measure). Positive identification of seven regular Army divisions. . . located roughly in a cross-country belt between the 38 and 39th Parallels.[46]

The relevance of these reports was hampered by the failure to consider reports from other sources. There were problems between the CIA and General MacArthur's GHQ that were personal and had nothing to with professionalism. General MacArthur had nothing but disdain for the CIA and wanted them removed from Japan and Korea. His negative attitude toward the CIA stemmed from disagreements he had with the forerunner to the CIA the Office of Strategic Service (OSS). He tried unsuccessfully to keep the CIA out of Japan and Korea; and the CIA was not part of the FECOM headquarters.[47] Intelligence must be seamless, and even non-military agencies must focus their effort on the tactical or

operational commander in General MacArthur's case. There were numerous intelligence reports forwarded to Washington from the CIA, KMAG, and KLO on events in North Korea, but there was no timely analysis conducted on those reports which could have helped the operational commanders.

Despite numerous indications that the NKPA was posturing for war and the NKPA could attack at any time, several times in the Spring of 1950 General Roberts predicted that an attack by North Korea was not likely in the spring or summer. Furthermore, despite the inferior equipment and limited counterattack capability, they still believed that the ROK Army could hold off any invasion by North Korea.[48] As late as the first week of June 1950, General Roberts stated in *Time* magazine "Most observers now rate the 100,000-man South Korean Army as the best of its size in Asia . . . and no one now believes the North Korean Army could pull-off a quick, successful invasion of the South."[49]

It was North Korea's intention to probe the ROK defenses for any weaknesses, while seeking to ascertain U.S. commitment to South Korea. With these tasks completed, it need only prepare its men and population for the coming conflict. Unfortunately, American officials had publicly shown a less than enthusiastic resolve to supporting South Korea. While these probes and raids continued, the CIA correctly reported that those isolated raids could at any time turn into a full-scale attack. Still, nobody in Washington or the KMAG heeded those warnings.[50]

During the weeks immediately prior to 25 June 1950, only the KLO reported the NKPA was posturing for war. It noted NKPA assault divisions were forward, railroad movement from the capital south was restricted to military supplies, and the local populace was evacuated from their villages along the 150 mile border. There was reporting but no planning for execution. Combined with Washington's focus on Europe, the U.S. remained unprepared. The fact remains that there was enough information on the NKPA to have prevented surprise. The operational and strategic chain of command failed to act on the intelligence provided.[51]

Almost one year after the last U.S. combat units left Korea, the NKPA conducted a surprise attack. On an unusually cold and rainy morning for June, an armored task force spearheaded the attack across the 38th Parallel.

> The invasion of South Korea was not unexpected, though its timing was something of a surprise. Despite their public pronoucements, KMAG believed sooner or later the North Koreans would strike south., that the war would be bloody, but that in the end South Korea would be able to hold off the attack.[52]

With the departure from Korea of General Roberts to retirement on 20 June 1950 five days before the war, Ambassador Muccio became the senior military advisor to the ROK Army. When hostilities began, no replacement for General Roberts had been named, and Colonel William S. Wright, KMAG Chief of Staff, assumed responsibility of the military advisors as the senior American officer in the country.

On 27 June, the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed General MacArthur to take command of all United States military forces in Korea, including KMAG. With the

exception of 33 officers, KMAG personnel were evacuated out of the country. The remaining personnel continued in their advisory positions with ROK Army headquarters, but intelligence gathering was irrepairably damaged. KMAG in total should have been kept on to advise newly arriving forces. Now their experience was lost. These advisors had been more than casual observers of the ROK Army, they also had observed the threatening posture of the NKPA. They knew the terrain and weather conditions in Korea. They were a necessary piece of the intelligence cycle that was now missing.[53]

During the first two days of the attack, Ambassador Muccio did not immediately forward reports about the seriousness of the actual situation.[54] Instead, he waited for verification of the initial reports. He admitted the ROK Army had been surprised and knocked off balance, but they made a gallant comeback by midnight and seemed to have stabilized the situation. "I am confident that that they will not be found wanting in the test to come."[55] The well-coordinated attack had taken the ambassador and the KMAG by surprise. They had underestimated the intent and resolve of the NKPA. The ambassador and his advisors found it difficult to believe the current disastrous situation, when they had been reporting for months the complete opposite. The lack of a G-2 section in Korea section to analyze the raw intelligence gathered in the spring of 1950, led them to believe no attack was pending in the spring or summer, and convinced them that the ROK Army could thwart any NKPA invasion. General Roberts and Ambassador Muccio had stated publicly that the ROK Army was the

best army in Asia, and could handle the NKPA, and if adequately supplied, they would fight bravely and with distinction.[56]

General MacArthur's GHQ did not know the magnitude of the NKPA attack on 25 June, telling John Foster Dulles, special representative to Secretary of Defense Acheson, the NKPA attack was not an all-out effort supported by the Soviet Union and the ROK Army would be victorious.[57] It was not until the end of the second day that Far East Command became cognizant of the seriousness of activities on the peninsula. The first report on the invasion did not even come from the KMAG, but came over the United Press news service. It took six almost seven hours for the first reports to arrive in Japan. The telegram with news of the attack stated,

> Fighting with great intensity started at 0400, 25 June on the Ongjin Peninsula, moving eastwardly taking six major points; city of Kaesong fell to North Koreans at 0900, ten tanks slightly north of Chunchon, landing twenty boats approximately one regiment strength east reported cutting coastal road south of Kangnung; Comment: No evidence of panic among South Korean troops.[58]

Without initial intelligence reports from KMAG and no way to confirm the situation with the KLO, General MacArthur inadvertently misled the president to the seriousness of the fighting in Korea. The first 24 hours after the initiation of hostilities, General Willoughby's KLO was cut off and unable to reestablish communications. Those reports might have been critical to providing early confirmation on actual events in Korea, and could have provided a more accurate picture for the commander and the follow-on forces.

Since he did not have verifiable intelligence either, General MacArthur felt compelled to fly to Korea with key members of his staff, four days after the NKPA

attack to assess the strategic and tactical situation for himself. General Willoughby was on that flight. It may have been MacArthur's habit to evaluate the battlefield, but no commanding general should have to personally fly to a hostile battlefield to assess the enemy situation, when he has a G-2. General MacArthur's purpose was to reconnoiter at first hand the conditions as they existed and to determine the most effective way to further support the mission.[59] The purpose of the intelligence staff is to evaluate the enemy and the terrain for the commander, so that he can maximize his efforts on other matters. General MacArthur went to Korea to gain intelligence for himself.

For eight hours General MacArthur received briefings, met with key military and political leaders including President Rhee, Ambassador Muccio and even viewed the battlefield south of Seoul and the Han River. He saw smoke billowing from Seoul and passed thousands of refugees on the road fleeing south. He judged that day the situation would warrant a US invasion to restore the Republic of Korea.[60]

General MacArthur concluded the only assurance for holding the present line and the ability to regain later the lost ground was through the introduction of US ground combat forces into the Korean battle area. Continued use of air and navy without a ground component would not be decisive.[61] He then requested the immediate deployment of a U.S. regimental combat team to reinforce the ROK Army that was falling back disorganized, and to provide for a possible buildup of two divisions from the troops stationed in Japan for an early counter-offensive.[62]

From his commander's estimate of the battlefield General MacArthur believed it was necessary to immediately commit forces into Korea even if it was piecemeal. His strategy was tied to a belief that the presence of American ground forces in the battle area would require the enemy commander to decrease his tempo and take precautionary and time consuming methods. General MacArthur hoped that this act would buy time for space and allow him to build up a force at Pusan to serve as a base for future operations. Speed in getting troops to the Korean theater of war was his priority. The enemy did not have intelligence assets forward in the battle area, or the means to intercept radio communications to know American strength, intentions, or capabilities. He had hoped that by "an arrogant display of strength, the enemy would be tricked into believing the American force was substantial."[63]

General MacArthur ordered the 24th Infantry Division to go immediately to Korea. The 24th Division was selected because it was located on Kyushu, the southernmost island in the Japanese chain, and by proximity it was closest of the four occupation divisions to Korea. Unfortunately, it was not ready.

Lieutenant Colonel Smith was the commander of the 1st Battalion 21st Infantry, when he was selected to lead the regimental combat team from 24th Division. There was no hesitation over the decision to select Smith. He was from the West Point class of (1939), thirty-four, and had ably commanded an infantry battalion on Guadalcanal.[64] No commander likes to commit troops piecemeal, but Smith was the man for the job if it had to be done. He had a fine World War II

record in the South Pacific and was a natural leader.[65] He had been assigned to Hawaii the fateful morning of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, so surprises were not knew to him.

1st Battalion 21st Infantry had successfully completed an external evaluation by Headquarters, Eighth Army. The results of Eighth Army's evaluation found Lieutenant Colonel Smith's battalion the best of the worse available. This was not an evaluation of the battalion's ability to move, shoot, or communicate. This was an administrative inspection, and Lieutenant Colonel Smith's battalion had all of its paperwork in order.[66] Other factors that made his battalion the logical choice for deployment included: the proximity of Kyushu to Korea, a mere 90 miles, of the other battalions, the 19th was at a training area on the main island of Honshu and not available for deployment, and the 34th was just woefully not combat ready. Lieutenant Colonel Smith's unit was not prepared for war either, but it was the most mission capable of the six battalions in the division. It was further ahead on the training schedule and had even conducted some air mobility training.[67]

The chain of command and control that had authority over American military forces on 25 June 1990 ran from General MacArthur at Headquarters FECOM through Lieutenant General Walker, Commanding General, Eighth Army through General Dean, Commanding General, 24th Division through Colonel Richard Stephens, Commander, 21st Regiment to Lieutenant Colonel Smith. This was the standard structure in 1950, and it is relatively the same today. The

exception is that the FECOM is replaced by a theater commander-in-chief (CINC), and regiments today are brigades. After arriving in Korea, the chain of command changed for Lieutenant Colonel Smith. Major General John Church had been sent from Japan to Korea by General MacArthur to establish an advance headquarters and command all American military forces in Korea. To General Church's dismay, he also assumed command and direction of the tattered ROK Army and the defense of South Korea.[68] The new command and control structure now ran from General Church to General Dean to Lieutenant Colonel Smith.

The intelligence chain of command mirrored the command and control structure in Japan. Intelligence ran from the G-2 FECOM through the G-2 Eighth Army through the G-2 24th Infantry Division through the Regimental S-2 21st Infantry Regiment to the Battalion S-2 1st Battalion, 21st Regiment. In Korea, the intelligence chain of command ran from G-2 FECOM to General Church to Lieutenant Colonel Smith.

It is the responsibility of the higher headquarters to push all available information to the subordinate headquarters, and in the absence of information, the subordinate command may request intelligence on the current situation through request for information (RFI). The exchange of information must be two way. It must flow up and down the chain of command. With the sudden alert, buildup of forces, and deployment the command and control apparatus became chaotic, but as a minimum, Lieutenant Colonel Smith was obligated to receive an intelligence update. Where chaos abounds, corrrect, timely intelligence gives the commander

an advantage. That is why Lieutenant Colonel Smith needed to know anything and everything possible about Korea and the pending mission.

There had been previously developed intelligence estimates, but none of these estmates had been disseminated to Lieutenant Colonel Smith. The chaos and complexity of the situation, demanded a knowledgeable officer from the FECOM G-2 section brief Lieutenant Colonel Smith and provide a summary of enemy activities. G-2 FECOM did not have a direct communications link in place to provide information once Lieutenant Colonel Smith's battalion left Japan, therefore it was incumbent that the G-2 provide all the information it could prior to the task force's departure. According to Colonel Phillip Davidson, an intelligence officer in the GHQ G2 section, "the GHQ was focused on its occupation duties not a war mission, and it took some time to prepare the FECOM to become a warfighting headquarters."[69]

Lieutenant Colonel Smith was the combatant commander deploying to Korea, who needed information on the current situation. As a minimum he required an intelligence briefing on the current enemy and freindly situation in Korea, and what he could expect upon arrival in country. It would also have been helpful to have received a briefing on what General MacArthur saw on his visit to Korea. Knowing the commander's intent was critical to his own planning and understanding of the situation into which he was being thrust.

Information from General MacArthur's eight hour visit, and 2,000 word cablegram forwarded to the JCS that might have been valuable to a task force commander included:

> The Korean army and coastal forces are in confusion . . . organized and equipped as a light force . . . they were unprepared for attack by armor and air. Conversely, they are incapable of gaining the initiative over such a force as that embodied in the North Korean Army. They are gradually being gathered up in rear areas and given some semblance of organization by an advance group of my officers I have sent over for this purpose. Without artillery, mortars, and anti-tank guns, they can only hope to retard the enemy through the fullest utilization of natuaral obstcles . . . North Korean military forces are backed by considerable strength in armor and a well trained, well directed and aggressive air force equipped with Russian planes. North Korean air has been savage in its attacks in the Suwon area.[70]

General MacArthur having assessed the situation, believed the ROK Army was incapable of counter-action and what was needed was a 2,200 men regimental combat team followed by up to two more divisions.[71] A shortage of air transport planes made it impossible to send anything more than half of a battalion.

Lieutenant Colonel Smith was alerted in Japan during the night of 30 June at 10:30 p.m., five full days after hostilities began in Korea. By 1 July it was common knowledge that armor had led the attack, and that the ROK Army had been ineffective against it, but TF Smith did not have this information. There seemed to be enough time to get intelligence to Lieutenant Colonel Smith even if it lacked specificity. Some information could have been provided initially and then gaps could have been filled in as more became available.

Lieutenant Colonel Smith was not helped by the chaotic situation of going from a peacetime garrison battalion to deployment and combat, and he did not recognize how important intelligence would be. During this chaotic period he did not request any additional information. There may be at least three reasons why he

may not have requested any information; he felt comfortable with the little that he had been told, he failed to ask for more information and is culpable, or he did not ask for more information thinking that he would get no reply.

Lieutenant Colonel Smith's regimental commander only told him that "the lid had blown off and for him to get in immediately."[72] He did not receive a threat briefing from his regimental intelligence officer, only a simple warning order from his regimental commander. Colonel Stephens, told Lieutenant Colonel Smith's to take his battalion, minus A and D Companies, to Itazuke Air Base, and fly immediately to Korea. General Dean would meet him at the airfield with further instructions.[73] The order was nebulous, but he saluted and moved out. By 0300 on 1 July he and his men were enroute to Itazuke Air Base for the flight to an airfield on the outskirts of Pusan. His received no mission statement or a commanders intent. While he was told to mobilize and deploy, he was not told what to do when he got there, if he got there. Colonel Stephens did not know enough about the Korean situation either to tell him more.

The soldiers of Task Force Smith were also at a disadvantage and had not been briefed on any aspect of their mission prior to leaving Japan. They did not believe they were going anywhere to fight. They had the impression they were going to protect and help Americans leaving the country.[74] If fighting was required, many of the men believed once the North Koreans discovered American troops had entered the war they would begin to pull back. No one yet had briefed them on the military situation or on anything else about Korea and its people and

culture.[75] They incorrectly believed the enemy they faced was similar in training and equipment to the Republic of Korea (ROK) military force, and similar to them.[76] They expected the NKPA to be poorly led, poorly trained and lightly equipped. However, many of the soldiers in the lead enemy regiments were veterans, who had fought with the Chinese Communist and Soviet Armies in World War II. These veterans made up about one third of the NKPA, giving it a combat-hardened quality.[77]

Lieutenant Colonel Smith remarked, "I knew nothing about the Korean situation or what my men and I were about to get into."[78] Because intelligence was not automatically pushed down to him, it was Lieutenant Colonel Smith's responsibility as task force commander to demand it. As the subordinate, he needed to ask questions about the situation and force his higher headquarters to push intelligence down to him. TF Smith deployed without the means to get intelligence from Japan, all it could depend on in the combat area was General Church's ADCOM headquarters. Despite the presence of the ADCOM, they did not have direct communications equipment with TF Smith to share any current intelligence because they too had been hurried to Korea without all of the necessary equipment.

Upon arrival in Korea, Lieutenant Colonel Smith was met by General Dean, his division commander. General Dean gave more broad guidance, but nothing about the enemy.

> "When you get to Pusan head for Taejon. We want to stop the North Koreans as far from Pusan as we can. Block the main road as far north as possible. Contact General Church (the Advance Command and Liaison Group Commander ADCOM) . . . Sorry I can't give you more information. That's all I've got. Good luck to you, and God bless

you and your men."[79]

While this order provided a mission, there was still no mention of the opposing enemy's capabilities or intent. To its credit it did acknowledge the need for divine intervention.

After arriving in Taejon, Lieutenant Colonel Smith was taken to General Church's headquarters, where he received another vague mission order. Pointing to a place on the map, General Church said, "We have a little action up here. All we need is some men who won't run when they see tanks. We're going to move you up to support the ROKs and give them moral support."[80]

Lieutenant Colonel Smith was alerted almost three days before seeing General Church, but this was the first information he received on the enemy. The command and control structure was still chaotic and had not been flushed out, affecting the flow of information. G-2 FECOM had institutional problems. It had no prior experience passing intelligence to lower levels. Their intelligence had always been directed at General MacArthur, not a tactical commander.

After his conversation with General Church, Lieutenant Colonel Smith still did not know the size of the force he would oppose. General Church in the ADCOM Headquarters at Suwon Airfield was augmented by KMAG personnel who knew about NKPA forces and the situation. General Church's staff was small but they had intelligence even if it had not been current to the minute. They did not tell Lieutenant Colonel Smith about NKPA tactics of using tanks to create a penetration to allow for following infantry, and the flanking techniques of the

infantry when they came upon a defensive position. They told him about tanks, but they did not tell him the type, the number, or how to defeat them. He was also not told about enenmy aircraft that would later strafe him as he conducted his leader's reconnaissance and issued his five paragraph field order. He was told only to provide moral support to the ROK Army, again implying that the situation may not be that serious.

G-2 FECOM's lack of experience at pushing intelligence to lower levels made it difficult to provide essential elements of information to the deploying force. Information on the terrain and weather, and its effect on both enemy and friendly operations. Information that was common knowledge to the G-2 from previous years of occupation in Korea.

When information is not passed to a commander, the tactical commander must drive the intelligence effort. He must ask the right questions and focus the intelligence work. He must know the enemy; the commander's personal involvement and knowledge have no substitutes.[81] Lieutenant Colonel Smith required information on the enemy, the weather conditions, and the terrain on which he would be fighting.

With no communications or intelligence from higher on the enemy, and his men defending the highway, the best intelligence Lieutenant Colonel Smith received was from the Army Aviation air liaison pilots flying Piper Cub L-5 fabric covered airplanes. Two aircraft piloted by Lieutenants Robert Adams and George Rogers were assigned to the 52nd Field Artillery Battalion in direct support to TF

Smith. The principal mission of Army Aviation during this period was observation. They fought as the eyes and ears of the infantry and the lanyard of the artillery.[82] They reported the terrain north of TF Smith's positions clear of enemy forces. The NKPA was so well camouflaged that the pilots missed seeing them.[83] TF Smith calmly waited through the cold rainy night for the an enemy they knew nothing about.

In the early morning hours of 5 July TF Smith came in contact with the NKPA. Six full days after he was first alerted, and he still had not received or requested more information on what his soldiers could expect. 1st Lieutenant Phillip Day, Jr., a platoon leader in C Company/21st Infantry, made out a column of tanks, and asked his sergeant, "What are those?" The sergeant replied, "Those are T34 tanks, sir, and I don't think they're going to be friendly toward us."[84] Later, these same soldiers would identify columns of trucks, bumper to bumper, carrying infantry. This intelligence could not be passed up the chain of command, because they did not have communications with General Church's ADCOM headquarters. The chaotic nature of the deployment and now the immediate problem of the NKPA made it impossible for TF Smith. The situation was compounded when they could not call for needed artillery fire, because the lead tanks cut the wires between the defensive positions and firing battery.

For seven hours TF Smith first battled tanks and then infantry, firing outdated artillery, mortars, recoilless rifles, 2.36 inch bazookas, and individual weapons without the value of any intelligence on the NKPA. They used every

piece of equipment they had. To their credit, these soldiers did not run when they saw tanks. They were creative, resourceful, and brave. The task force just did not have enough fire power to stop the tanks. Their anti-armor weapons and artillery had a limited effect on the T-34's of the 33 tanks in the North Korean battalion, 30 would continue to roll south. The three enemy tanks destroyed were hit by artillery direct fire. The 2.36 inch bazookas were useless even at point blank range on the tanks, but they had been ineffective in World War II. The enemy infantry would not be as fortunate as the armor, as 127 NKPA soldiers were killed or wounded attempting to assault the ridge before TF Smith fell back. In total, TF Smith lost 185 men killed, wounded, captured, or missing.[85]

TF Smith did not fail in its mission, it delayed for exactly seven hours. Designed to be a quick reaction force to slow a determined enemy, it prevented the enemy from overtaking the entire Korean peninsula before reinforcements could arrive. TF Smith succeeded in buying much needed time for General MacArthur to devise a strategy and acquire the forces to turn back the NKPA and reclaim the Republic of Korea.

TF Smith might have delayed the advancing regiments of the infantry division and its armor battalion longer, with a few well-placed antitank mines, but none were even in theater. An intelligence estimate that provided all available information on the enemy, weather, terrain, and effects on enemy and friendly operations might have also saved more lives and equipment on the Seoul-Pusan Highway, gaining even more time for follow-on forces to arrive in country. The

chaotic situation that Lieutenant Colonel Smith inherited was multiplied by the chaos and uncertainty that resulted in not having adequate intelligence. The situation was such that he did not have answers to basic questions on the enemy like who, what, when, where, why, and how many? Lieutenant Colonel Smith needed an intelligence estimate that told the capabilities, equipment, rate of movement, and predicted intentions of the NKPA. All of this information was lacking.

If General Sullivan made good on his promises, the U.S. should now be able to deploy a joint task force (JTF) to any theater in the world and provide the commander the necessary tactical intelligence to preclude another intelligence failure. Part of General Sullivan's solution toward not repeating the lesson of unpreparedness during 1950 and in 1995 was upgrading tactical intelligence systems such as All-Source Analysis System (ASAS), the Deployable Intelligence Support Element (DISE), and the remotely piloted vehicle (RPV). General Sullivan also forced tactical commanders to become personally involved in the intelligence effort. This involvement includes focusing collection efforts in order to insure intelligence is available at the key time a decision is to be made. Developing priority intelligence requirements (PIRs) is the means to focusing intelligence collection.

Commanders must know the answers to critical questions that will affect their mission, men, and equipment. Commanders must ask the right questions of their intelligence officers, so that he can focus intelligence assets. Intelligence

officers must provided intelligence early to allow the commander enough time to plan and make decisions. PIRs are these questions. The commander, as the senior officer in the unit, must use his knowledge and experience to guide him through his decision making process. The responsibility of intelligence cannot be left solely to a junior officer, an S-2, who has attended only the officer basic or advanced military intelligence courses. The level of responsibility taken by a task force commander in focusing the intelligence effort will determine whether there will be anymore Task Force Smiths. The commander must be at the center of the intelligence effort.

If we have learned anything from the experiences of Task Force Smith, it must be to make maximum use of available forces, equipment, and all-source intelligence. Training must be tough and realistic, and intelligence training must be part of that training. Training must be geared toward likely scenarios anywhere in the world that American forces may be deployed. We must also purchase the right equipment needed for likely threats. During the Cold War the military's priority was on purchasing satellites, but satellites have limited utility in OOTW. We need anti-sniper armor, nonlethal weapons, improved individual infrared equipment, and improved identify friend or foe (IFF) to prevent fratricide. Intelligence equipment must be cheaper and user friendly to keep up with changing times, and equipment must not cost billions of dollars or take years to get to the field. Technical intelligence must provide specifications on the new generation of Soviet tanks, so current and future weapons will be more effective than the 2.36 bazooka was

against the T-34. We will never have the ideal force structure to do all of the missions asked of us. To blame failure on the drawdown of the army was not accepted in 1950, and would not be acceptable today. We must leverage people and technology to do more with less.

Although they had the people and technology to collect and disseminate intelligence, the three intelligence bodies working independently in Korea failed to analyze and synthesize the information they were collecting. A system to process and evaluate that information could have identified trends and patterns that might have resulted in President Truman issuing warnings to North Korea before the invasion. Intelligence officers are frequently criticized for presenting the worst case scenario in an attempt to be not too wrong. Such reporting has no intrinsic value to the commander as he conducts operational planning. Instead, intelligence professionals are obligated to be more concerned with being predictive, than stating the obvious. By reporting that the enemy could conduct a full-scale attack at any time, without supporting analysis, the CIA was guilty of trying not to be too wrong.

Knowledge is power, and in the military knowledge must be collected and timely disseminated to the commander to have any relevant value. Intelligence stovepipes, that are only concerned with collecting information and vertical reporting, must be broken. If they are not borken down disjointed information results, and mission accomplishement is affectedWe must find ways to fuse collection and analysis and then disseminate that analysis, if we continue to

maintain agencies like the CIA, Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), and the National Security Agency (NSA). Perhaps there really should be a Central Intelligence Office or Agency that monitors the nation's security concerns. It should also have a computer system, armed with alarms that automatically alarm when too many indicators are received.

In the book Military Misfortunes, authors Eliot Cohen and John Gooch state there are three basic kinds of failure: failure to learn, failure to anticipate, and failure to adapt.[86] It is clear that failing to learn from history and failing to anticipate North Korean intentions prior to 25 June 1950 set the conditions for failure by Task Force Smith.

Thus, there were six intelligence failures associated with Task Force Smith. First, at the strategic level, intelligence focused on Europe at the risk to Korea. What was collected in Korea was not gathered to support war decisions, it was stovepiped between the supporting agencies, preventing them from sharing critical information. What information there was, was poorly analyzed. Second, at the operational and tactical levels, commanders did not know what intelligence they needed to accomplish their mission. They lacked adequate intelligence training, and their intelligence officers did not provide enough help to them. Third, the commanders underestimated the commitment of their adversary to fighting for the unification of Korea. Fourth, the commanders disregarded the effects of weather and terrain on themselves and the enemy. Fifth, the commanders disregarded the

most dangerous threat -- tanks. Finally, the task force did not have available technical intelligence of NKPA equipment, and was not armed for a credible fight.

Forty-six years after TF Smith an American military task force is subject to similar intelligence failures, if commanders do not take an active role in the production of intelligence. Lives will be lost, and missions will not be successful if commanders fail to learn from history, fail to anticipate the enemy, or ask the right questions of their intelligence officers to focus the intelligence effort.

ENDNOTES

[1] Sun Tzu, The Art of War, Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1994 p. 179.

[2] Carl von Clausewitz, On War, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, p. 119.

[3] Interview with Brigadier General Charles "Brad" Smith. General Smith, then the comander of 1st Batallion 21st Infantry Regiment, became the commander of the first regimental combat team introduced into the Korean theater, named Task Force Smith. By his own account, he has been telling the same story for forty-five years and he will conduct no more interviews on this subject.

[4] Napolean, Quote taken from Field Manual 34-1, p 3-1. Field Manual 34-1 is the Army's capstone manual for military intelligence (MI) doctrine. It is consistent with and expands doctrine contained in FM 100-5, the Army's operations doctrine. It provides the guidance needed by MI personnel to support the commander with intelligence and electronic warfare (IEW) in warfighting and in operations other than war (OOTW).

[5] T.E. Lawrence, Seven Pillars of Wisdom, New York, George Doran Publishing Company, 1926, p. 113.

[6] FM 34-1 Intelligence and Electronic Warfare Operations, p. 2-2.

[7] Ibid p. 2-3.

[8] Ibid p. 2-3.

[9] Army, "Dealing with Change In 'America's Army,'" p. 21, January 1992.

[10] FM 100-5 Operations, p.2-8. Field Manual 100-5 is the Army's capstone manual for conducting operations at the three levels of war, strategic, operational, and tactical, with joint and combined forces, and includes operartions other than war (OOTW).

[11] Interview with Major General Miller O. Perry, 5 September 1995. General Perry was a Lieutenant Colonel and the 52nd Field Artillery battalion commander during the Korean War. Delta Battery and his headquarters staff deployed in support of Task Force Smith.

[12] John W. Spanier, The Truman-MacArthur Controversy and the Korean War, W.W. Norton & Company Inc., New York 1965, p. 16.

[13] Joint Chiefs of Staff Memo 1776/4, 23 Jun 49: Implications of a Possible Full-Scale Invasion from North Korea Subsequent to the Withdrawal of U.S. Troops from Korea.

[14] Ibid p. 19.

[15] Dean Acheson, Present at the Cration: My Years in the State Department, New York, W.W. Norton, 1969, p. 381.

[16] Interview with Lieutenant General Phillip Davidson, 20 November 1995. General Davidison was a colonel in General MacArthur's Far East (FECOM) Headquarters immediately before and during the Korean War. He provided a valuable insight and filled many gaps for me on how intelligence was conducted.

[17] MacArthur Reminicenes, p.333. This book was General MacArthur's personal autobiography.

[18] James F. Schnaebel, Policy and Direction: The First Year, United States Army in the Korean War, Office of the Chief of Military History, United States Army, 1972, p. 50-51. This volumne is part of the United States Army in Korea War series of the Department of the Army's Center for Military History.

[19] MacArthur Senate Hearings,

[20] D.Clayton James, The Years of MacArthur Volume III, 1946-1964, p. 41.

[21] MacArthur, p. 284.

[22] Ibid, p. 338.

[23] Schnaebel, p. 54-55.

[24] Blair, p. 57.

[25] Ibid, p. 57.

[26] Schnaebel, p. 34

[27] Interview with LTG Phillip Davidson

[28] Rod Paschall, Witness to War in Korea, A collection of Original Source Documents, U.S. Army War College Carlisle Barracks, 1994, p. 23.

[29] Ibid, p. 23-24.

[30] Clay Blair, The Forgotten War, Doubleday, New York, p. 53, 1987.

[31] Senate Hearings by Ambassador John Muccio.

[32] Robert K. Sawyer, Military Advisors in Korea: KMAG in Peace and War, Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1962, p. 33.

[33] Appleman, South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, United States Army in the Korean War, 1961, p. 11. This is the second volume that was heavily resourced in providing an understanding of the Korean War. It is also part of the Korea War series of the Department of the Army's Center for Military History.

[34] Paschall, p. 18.

[35] Blair, p. 51.

[36] Ibid, p. 44.

[37] Letter from Dr. Rhee to President Truman.

[38] Schnabel, p. 34.

[39] Charles A. Willoughby & John Chamberlain, MacArthur 1941-1951, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc. New York, 1954, p. 351. General Willoughby had been a member of the MacArthur palace guard since 1941. Fifty-eight years old in 1950, the German-born Willoughby was a man of deliberately vague origins. He occasionally claimed to be the son of a German baron, a refugee from undefined political persecution. Willoughby came to the U.S. in 1910, at age eighteen, joined the U.S. Army as Adolph Charles Weidenbach, as a private, and eventually won a commission and changed his name. He was a master at writing, spoke five languages fluently, and like MacArthur, he distrusted unconventional methods of gathering intelligence like the CIA.

[40] Far East Command G2 Reports from KLO June 1949, Daily Intelligence Summaries, FECOM.

[41] Far East Command G2 Reports from KLO September 1949 Daily Intelligence Summaries, FECOM.

[42] Far East Command G2 Reports from KLO December 1949 Daily Intelligence Summaries, FECOM.

[43] Far East Command G2 Reports from KLO January 1950 Daily Intelligence Summaries, FECOM.

[44] Far East Command G2 Reports from KLO March 1950 Daily Intelligence Summaries, FECOM.

[45] Far East Command G2 Reports from KLO April 1950, Daily Intelligence Summaries, FECOM.

[46] Far East Command G2 Reports from KLO May 1950 Daily Intelligence Summaries, FECOM.

[47] Joseph C. Goulden, Korea, The Untold Story of the War, 1982, p.38.

[48] Paschall, p.21

[48] Blair, p. 71.

[49] Time (June 5, 1950), p. 26-27. In the July 3, 1950 issue, Time quoted General Roberts as saying the ROK Army was the "best doggone shooting Army outside the United States."

[50] Ray S.Cline, Secrets, Spies, and Scholars, Washington, Acropolis Books, 1976, p. 224.

[51] Fehrenbach, p. 66-67.

[52] Mark Perry, Four Stars, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1989, p. 21.

[53] Sawyer, p.48.

[54] Blair, p. 71.

[55] Ibid, p. 71

[56] Ibid, p. 70.

[57] Ibid, p. 73.

[58] Schnabel, p. 65.

[59] MacArthur Letter to JCS.

[60] Blair, p. 77.

[61] Foreign Relations of the United States, p.249, MacArthur to Acheson and JCS, 30 June 1950.

[62] MacArthur Letter.

[63] MacArthur, p. 335-338.

[64] Blair, p. 95.

[65] Donald Knox The Korean War An Oral History Pusan to Chosin, p. 13.

[66] Interview with BG Smith

[67] Interview with BG Smith

[68] Blair, p. 76.

[69] Interview with LTG Davidson

[70] James p. 429-430.

[71] MacArthur, p. 338.

[72] Appleman, p. 60.

[73] Ibid, p. 60.

[74] Knox, An Oral History, 1st Lieutenant Philip Day, Jr.p. 15.

[75] Knox, Corporal Lacy Barnett, p.17-18.

[76] Ibid., p. 18.

[77] Appleman, p. 9.

[78] Interview with General Smith.

[79] Appleman, p. 61.

[80] Ibid, p. 61.

[81] FM 100-5, p.2-12

[82] Dario Politella, Operation Grasshopper, Univerity of Kansas Press, p. 7, 14.

[83] Ibid, p. 17.

[84] Knox, p. 19.

[85] Appleman, p. 76.

[86] Elliot A. Cohen and John Gooch, Military Misfortunes, The Anatomy of Failure in War, p. 27.

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